Claiming Martyrdom in the Episode of The Martyrs of Córdoba

[Reivindicación del martirio en el episodio de los mártires de Córdoba]

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Resumen: Entre 850 y 859 A. D., las autoridades de Córdoba dictaron la pena capital para cuarenta y cuatro cristianos que habían insultado al Islam. El presente artículo estudia el uso de la discusión agustianana de martirio y ortodoxia en el episodio de los mártires de Córdoba. La eficacia del modelo agustiniano permitió por otra parte al autor del Memoriale, reinterpretar el material Bizantino sobre el que se basaba la obra y presentar el martirio de Córdoba como una declaración de ortodoxia religiosa.

Abstract: Between 850 and 859 A. D., the Muslim government of Córdoba ordered the execution of forty-four Christians for disparaging Islam. This article identifies the use of Augustinian discussion on martyrdom and orthodoxy in the episode of the martyrs of Córdoba. The efficacy of the Augustinian model allowed the author of the *Memoriale* to reinterpret Byzantine hagiographic material and present the martyrdom of Córdoba as a rallying declaration of religious orthodoxy.

Palabras clave: Martirio. Agustín. Hagiografía Bizantina. Ortodoxia religiosa.

Key words: Martyrdom. Augustine. Byzantine Hagiography. Religious Orthodoxy.

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Introduction[1]

Between 850 and 859 A. D., the Muslim government of Córdoba ordered the execution of forty-four Christians for disparaging Islam. On every occasion, the martyrs were summoned before the judge, where they declared the superiority of Christianity and the falsehood of Islam. Compelled by local laws, the judge dictated a sentence against the martyrs. In some cases, like in the martyrdom of Perfectus, the witnesses were deemed to be unreliable, and the martyr was flogged five hundred times, until he declared his fault. In most cases, however, Christians were flogged, mutilated and crucified.

The martyrs' remains were then disposed of in different ways. Sometimes, their bodies were charred and their ashes were thrown into the river, in order to avoid the dissemination of relics. Other times, they were given to dogs. The Christian community was successful in recovering some of their bones and placed them for veneration in local churches.[2]

The motivation of the martyrs and the reaction of the judges in the *Memoriale Sanctorum* has been the object of frequent discussion. The

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[1] A preliminary version of this paper was given at the *Conference Al-Andalus: Cultural Diffusion and Hybridity in Iberia* (*1000-1600)* at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in October 2007. I am indebted to Julie Daum, Scott Johnson, Josefa Conde, María del Carmen Parafita Couto, Ross Harry and Traci Tybdahl for their valuable comments and help in writing this essay.

[2] The sacrifice of Prudentius states how people coming from across the river could see him as he was being slaughtered, but we must also consider the possibility that the martyrs were buried across the river, in the district of the Arrabal. It was in this site where Hakam I crucified three hundred insurgents during the revolt in 818. See IBN AL-ATHĪR, *al-Kāmil fi l-ta'rīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1997). José Manuel SÁEZ, *El movimiento martirial de Córdoba. Notas sobre la bibliografía*. 26 Nov. 2008. U. de Alicante. <http://www.ua.es/personal/jms/hc/mov martirial.pdf.> For a discussion of Greek Byzantine influence in Eulogius' *Life of Muhammad*, see Janna WASILEWSKI, "The 'Life of Muhammad' in Eulogius of Córdoba: some evidence for the transmission of Greek polemic to the latin West", *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (2008), pp. 333-353. Cf. Claudio SÁNCHEZ ALBORNOZ, *La España musulmana según los autores islamitas y cristianos medievales* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1986), v. 1, p. 451.

earliest defense of these voluntary martyrdoms was made by Eulogius of Córdoba soon after the executions in the *Memoriale*, a hortative treatise destined to encourage Flora and Maria to uphold their decision of invoking voluntary martyrdom. Cast in the inter-reign between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II (821- 852) and Muhammad I (852-886), Eulogius discusses at length the persecution suffered by Christians and the ominous pressure of their Arab rulers, casting the voluntary martyrdoms in a quasi apocalyptic setting that has more to do with biblical precedents than with factual truth. [3]

Recent scholarship on the movement of the voluntary martyrs has located the episode in the tradition of oriental martyrologies that would have traveled to Spain as early as the 8th century. Drawing from these sources, the evidence shows that the *Memoriale* was not necessarily intended as an attack against Islam, but as a way of affirming communal identity among Christians in Córdoba. In this sense, the *Memoriale* would have sought to recreate the religious polemics that had taken place between Orthodox, Nestorian or even Monophysite communities under Muslim rule.[4]

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[3] The text that we now have was copied in the 15th century by Ambrosio de Morales, who allegedly altered this and other passages of the original manuscript. Ambrosio de MORALES, *Divi Eulogii Cordubensis, Martyris, Doctoris et electi Archiepiscopi Toletani Opera* (Alcalá de Henares, 1574), p. 62.

[4] For Edward Colbert, the movement was an effort to prevent assimilation from Arab Muslim society. Edward P. COLBERT, *The Martyrs of Córdoba* (*850-859): A Study of the Sources* (Washington, DC: The Catholic U of America Press, 1962). The first modern interpretation was given by Kenneth Baxter Wolf, who emphasized Eulogius' effort to represent the martyrs of Córdoba like their ancient Roman counterparts. Wolf argues that the movement reflected a declaration of religious identity in the context of the shifting religious alliances of the 9th century. Kenneth Baxter WOLF, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1988). Jessica Coope considers the episode as a reaction against Arab-Muslim culture and a defense of Christian identity. Jessica A. COOPE, *The Martyrs of Córdoba: Community and Family Conflict in an Age of Mass Conversion* (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1995). Cf. Eva LAPIEDRA GUTIÉRREZ, "Los mártires de Córdoba y la política anticristiana en occidente", *Al-Qanṭara* 15: 2 (1994), pp. 453-463. Eva Lapiedra argues that the episode of the martyrs is possibly influenced by the anti-Christian politics promulgated by Mutawakkil in

The division of Christians certainly reached the Muslim community and may have influenced ʿAbd al-Raḥmān´s decision to summon the council of 852 in Córdoba, to discuss the validity of the martyrdoms.[5] Bishop Recafredus, who was openly hostile to the voluntary martyrdoms, represented the party of the emir. After much discussion, the council decided to forbid new martyrdoms, but refused to condemn those that had already happened. Commenting on this decree, Eulogius expressed his fear that it might discourage new actions on the parts of the Christians.[6]

Bagdad in the 850's. Clayton J. Drees studies the voluntary martyrdom in the light of modern psychology and points out to the relation that exists between victims precipitates homicide and social groups that are ostracized or deemed inferior by mainstream society. Clayton J. DREES, "Sainthood and suicide: the motives of the martyrs of Córdoba, A. D. 850-859", *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 20 (1990), pp. 59-90. Janina SAFRAN, "Identity and Differentiation in Ninth-Century Al-Andalus", *Speculum* 76: 3 (2001), pp. 573-598. Safran discusses the voluntary martyrdom against the backdrop of the apocalyptic atmosphere of the 9th century. Juan Pedro MONFERRER SALA, "Mitografía hagiomartirial. De nuevo sobre los supuestos mártires cordobeses del siglo IX", in M. FIERRO (ed.), *De muerte violenta. Política, religión y violencia en al-Andalus* (Madrid: Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2004), pp. 415-450. J. P. Monferrer Sala places the *Memoriale* in the context of the struggles among Christian communities in 9th century Córdoba and sees the *Memoriale* as an attempt to define religious orthodoxy among Christian groups. He rejects the historicity of the text and contends that it is an 'imitatio' in the tradition of the martyria, written in the early stages of Christianity. Cf. Pedro CASTILLO MALDONADO, "El pasionario hispánico como fuente de los mártires hispanorromanos", *Revista de Humanidades de la Universidad de Jaén* 4/5: 2 (1995-1996), pp. 111-123. For a discussion of the contact of the Christian Arabs of Córdoba with Oriental anti-Muslim works, see Dominique MILLET-GÉRARD, *Chrétiens Mozarabes et Cultura Islamique dans l'Espagne des VIII-IX siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1984). See also Dominique URVOY, "The Christological Consequences of Muslim-Christian Confrontation in Eight-Century Spain" in M. FIERRO and J. SAMSÓ (eds.), *The Formation of Al-Andalus* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1988), pp. 37-48 and Mikel de EPALZA, "Félix de Urgel: influencias islámicas encubiertas de judaísmo y los mozárabes del siglo VIII", *Acta Historica et Archeologica Medieaevalia* 22: 2 (1999-2001), pp. 31-66.

5 *Memoriale* 2, 15.

6 The Council of Córdoba of 839 condemned the heresies of the Acephali or cassians who fasted –like the priscillianists- on Christmas Day, who denied the sacredness of relics, who distributed communion in their hands, who were allegedly bigamous and

Acculturation, integration and social intercourse seem to have also generated anxieties inside the Christian community and influenced the perception of Christian religious groups as more Islamized than others.

This article critically examines the conception of martyrdom in the *Memoriale* and addresses issues of martyrdom legitimacy that may have influenced the composition of the *Memoriale*. After examining the sources, it shows that Eulogius' justifications for voluntary martyrdom are the result of a major interpretation of martyrdom advanced by St. Augustine. This article establishes that there is a direct relationship between the Augustinian interpretation of martyrdom and the actions of the martyrs of Córdoba. It will also argue that the new interpretation of martyrdom challenged Christian prohibitions against suicide, and that it fostered an understanding of martyrdom as a declaration of religious orthodoxy.

The first section of this essay, argues that witness bearing in the *Memoriale* followed Byzantine hagiographic material. On the one hand, it articulated notions of legitimacy vis à vis Muslim power. On the other hand, it articulated a hagiographic typology destined to exalt the martyrs of Córdoba. The second and third sections discuss Eulogius' use of the Augustinian interpretation of biblical sources, and how voluntary martyrdom became an occasion for determining religious orthodoxy, delineating at the same time the boundaries between the voluntary martyrs and the religious community they represented.

2. Legal procedure

2.1. Witness bearing

In 850 Perfectus, was stopped by some Muslims as he went around the city, conducting some business. Interrogated about his faith, Perfectus confessed the divinity of Christ, but expressed his reluctance to say

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incestuous, and who were traders by nature. The acts are preserved in the *Codex Samuelis*. For a longer discussion of the Council, see Carlton M. SAGE, *Paul Albar of Córdoba. Studies on his Life and Writings* (Washington, DC: The Catholic U of America P, 1943).

anything against Islam, lest he offended his interrogators. Mediating an amiable truce, Prudentius spoke to them in Arabic and told them how Islam was in fact a corruption of Christianity. He then explained how Muhammad had committed adultery with Zaynab. He then returned to his cell. Soon after, he went back into the city and encountered the same people, who now took him to the judge and accused him of insulting the prophet and his followers. The judge then enclosed him into a prison until the day of Easter. Gaining strength in adversity, Perfectus was summoned once again in front of the judge and condemned both the prophet and Islam. He was then killed with a sword and the people who had come from the other side of the river to celebrate the Muslim Easter, rejoiced in his death. That same day, a boat of men sank in the river, killing all of them. Perfectus was then buried in the church of St. Acisclus. [7]

Though Perfectus had not deliberately invoked the laws against blasphemy, his execution signaled the importance that the Muslim judge had in the voluntary martyrdoms. Instead of committing suicide, the action of the martyr indicated a deliberate knowledge and use of the legal procedures in place, in order to legitimize his/her own death. For Mālikite jurists, the main conservative judicial school in Umayyad Córdoba, insult against Islam constituted breaking the pact that existed between Muslims and Christians, and justified the application of capital punishment.[8] The

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[7] While the condemnation of Muhammad as a false prophet seems to be extracted from the Bible, the allusion to Zaynab is recorded in Islamic tradition. *Qur'ān* 33:37: "And when you said to him to whom Allah had shown favor and to whom you had shown a favor: Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; and you concealed in your soul what Allah would bring to light, and you feared men, and Allah had a greater right that you should fear Him. But when Zaid had accomplished his want of her, we gave her to you as a wife, so that there should be no difficulty for the believers in respect of the wives of their adopted sons, when they have accomplished their want of them; and Allah's command shall be performed". *Qur'ān*. Translated by Mohammedali H. SHAKIR (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarile Qur´an, 1999).

[8] For a discussion on the attitude of the Mālikist School towards martyrdom, see Mayte PENELAS, "Doctrina malikí sobre el martirio", in Maribel FIERRO (ed.), *De muerte violenta. Política, religión y violencia en Al-Andalus* (Madrid: Centro Superior de

Māliki jurist al-Qayrawānī (d. 996) distinguished between two kinds of insult: an outright attack against Islam, made by ill intent and therefore punishable by death, and a simple declaration of one's own religion. In this last case, the Christian could not be held accountable for this offense. If one insulted Islam beyond the needs of his religion, he or she would have to be executed.[9]

While Perfectus could have been liable for breaking the first law, he could not be held guilty on account of his religion. The attempt to persuade him and to dismiss his offense constitutes part of the legal proceeding and reveals a keen knowledge of local trial custom. The judge (*qāḍī* in Arabic) is a classical figure of the Muslim administration. His role was eminently religious, because his decrees were always based on divine prescriptions. Initially appointed by the sovereign, the *qāḍī* was the only person who had judicial representation in Islam.[10] His role was to rule both civil and penal cases. His decision was then final and could only be invalidated by the caliph himself, although this was a rare occurrence. In this sense, it is important to observe that the mission of the judge was to contest the power of the king and to secure the political order. In theory, he was independent to rule on cases of criminal justice. In Córdoba, the judge also was in

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Investigaciones Científicas, 2004) pp. 451-478. IBN ABĪ ZAYD AL-QAYRAWĀNĪ, *Compendio de derecho islámico*, Edited by Jesús Ríosalido, (Madrid: Trotta, 1993). Death penalty for apostasy was well documented inside the Maliki school. In chapter xxxvii of the *Risāla fī l-fiqh*, Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (+ 996) declares the death penalty for the heathen and those who offend God (134-5). The same disposition is contained in *al-Tafrī'* of IBN-AL-JALLĀB († 988 A. D.). *El tratado jurídico de Al-tafri de Ibn al-Ğallab*. Edited by Soha Abboud'Haggar (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 1999).

9 J. M. SÁEZ, *El movimiento martirial*, p. 69.

10 Rachid EL HOUR, "The Andalusian *Qāḍī* in the Almoravid Period: Political and Judicial Authority", *Studia Islamica* 90 (2000), p. 68. also AL-KHUSHANĪ, *Historia de los Jueces de Córdoba*. Trans. Julián Ribera (Madrid: Impr. Ibérica, 1914). For a discussion on the habilitation of witnesses, see David PELÁEZ PORTALES, "La habilitación de testigos en el derecho musulmán medieval." *Cuadernos de historia del derecho* 2 (1999), pp. 301-324. Peláez contends that all the sources showing applied processal law reflect Mālikī ideas.

charge of directing prayer and of preaching the Friday sermon. As a political and religious figure, the judge had a moral influence over the city and thus came to embody the decision and will of the common people. The judge usually exerted his counseling in the Great Mosque or in the patio, and only seldom in his own house.[11]

2.2. Court appeal

The trial of Perfectus is further complicated by Christian law. Already in the New Testament, Saint Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians established that Christians are not supposed to appeal to the courts of the infidels and states that that if small claims arise between members of the church, they should seek some arbitration method inside the church, and that personal gratification should not be put over Christian identity:

> Sic non est inter vos sapiens quisquam, qui possit iudicare inter fratrem suum? Sed frater cum fratre iudicio contendit: et hoc apud infideles? Iam quidem omnino delictum est in vobis, quod iudicia habetis inter vos. Quare non magis iniuriam accipitis? quare non magis fraudem patimini?[12]

In a recent article on Jewish and Christian appeal to Muslim authorities in the Middle East, scholar Uriel Simonsohn has discussed the problem of Christian appeals to non Christian courts. Simonsohn pointed out the permeability between different religious communities. As an effort to establish legal boundaries between groups, religious minorities were allowed to keep their own legal systems. "The source of this concern had naturally to do (…) with the frequency in which non-Muslims were turning to Muslim tribunals and Muslim leaders were involved in non-Muslim quarrels. These phenomena were not the outcome of a pre-designed plan of

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[11] Titus BURCKHARDT, *Die Maurische Kultur in Spanien* (Munich: Verlag Georg D.W. Callwey, 1970).

[12] *1 Corinthians* 8:1-8.

the Muslim authorities, rather a byproduct of the nature of Muslim regimes."[13] Simonsohn argues that the ongoing concern of non-Muslim leaders had to do with the frequency with which non-Muslims were turning to Muslim tribunals. Not having any factual army or religious institution to back their authority, non-Muslim authorities had to appeal to a network of communication that could keep their flocks between boundaries.

In Córdoba, Mozarabs were subject to Islamic rule. In specific cases, the judge had to determine whether a group of Christians was subject to the terms of a peace treaty or those of a conquest. The separation of Muslims from Christians was recommended by Islamic law. Generally speaking, while Muslim judges intervened little in affairs among Christians, Islamic law established that the court may arbitrate not only between two non-Muslims, but also when one of the litigants forced the other to appear before the court. In view of the fact that the state did not deal directly with individuals as such, but with their community, and was considered responsible for the economic status of each of its members, the Muslim authorities designated a *comes*, who was the representative of the Christian community. The *comes* was invested with fiscal functions (*exceptor*) and judicial functions (*censor*) which he could either exercise personally or delegate on another person.[14]

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[13] Uriel SIMONSOHN, "Communal Boundaries Reconsidered: Jews and Christians Appealing to Muslim Authorities in the Medieval Near East", *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 14 (2007), p. 331. See also Ana FERNÁNDEZ FÉLIX and M. FIERRO, "Cristianos y conversos al Islam en al-Andalus bajo los Omeyas: Una aproximación al proceso de islamización a través de una fuente legal andalusí del s. III/I", in Luis CABALLERO and Pedro MATEOS (eds.), *Visigodos y omeyas: un debate entre la Antigüedad tardía y la Alta Edad Media* (Madrid: Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2001), pp. 415-428. Félix and Fierro discuss how Muslim jurisprudence of this period expressed anxieties about contact with non-Muslim populations, and sought to establish laws that regulated the use of water, clothing, salutation gestures, or even prayer.

[14] The *Memoriale* states that Isaac was able to become an exceptor. Hanna KASSIS, "Arabic Speaking Christians in Al-Andalus in an Age of Turmoil (fifth/eleventh century, a.h. 478 /A. D. 1085)", *Al Qāntara* 15:2 (1994), p. 401. Hanna Kassis discusses among other works the treatise of Tudmir (713 A. D.)., which guaranteed the

In the *Memoriale*, the office of *exceptor* is considered as a traitor to the Christian community and is identified with Gómez, Eulogius' main antagonist in the Council of 852. From a Christian point of view, any collaboration with the Muslim authorities was seen with a suspicious eye, and contravened directly the decrees of the Arab Christians' main legal code: the *Liber iodicorum*. Written in 654 under Visigothic rule, the *Liber iudicorum* prevented Christians from appealing to other courts, but encouraged them to know them: "Aliene gentis legibus exercitiam hutilitatis inbui et permittimus et optamus; ad negotiorum vero discussionem et resultamus et proibemus. Quamvis enim eloquiis polleant, tamen difficultatibus herent. Adeo, cum sufficiat at iustitie plenitudinem et prescrutatio rationum et conpetentium ordo verborum, que codicis huius series agnoscitur continere, nolumus sive Romanis legibus seu alienis institutionibus amodo amplius convexari" (2, 1, 8).

By appealing to Muslim judges, Christians in the *Memoriale* are clearly infringing Christian law and displacing public interest in favor of personal gratification and the promise of eternal salvation. The selfishness of this action is made clear throughout the *Memoriale* and constitutes the main argument of those who question the validity of the voluntary martyrdoms. Underlining this apparent contradiction, the *Memoriale* undertakes a stark defense of Christian martyrdom, borrowed from the works of the fathers.

2.3. Punishment

The actions of the judges in the *Memoriale* are problematic to say the least, because their decisions don't seem to conform to what we know of jurisprudence in 10th century Córdoba. This aspect is especially clear in the punishments that are inflicted on the martyrs. A look at the executions reveals how the judges condemn the martyrs of Córdoba to suffer

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maintenance of the previous order (non-intervention in internal affairs, protection of property, freedom of worship and freedom from enslavement) and the *Sistematica Mozarabica*, a Christian Arab legal treatise composed in the beginning of the 11th century that showed a great degree of Islamic assimilation inside the Christian Arab community.

beheading and then to be crucified along the banks of the river. In some other cases, like with Rogelius and Serviodeus, the martyrs have their hands and feet cut off.

In the *Memoriale*, the martyrs are executed by the sole action of the judge. Yet traditionally, crucifixion in Islam was normally applied to enemies of Islam and to criminals, whether dead or alive, either on a beam or tree. The Qur'ānic reference usually applied here is 5:33: "They (the unbelievers) should be murdered or crucified or their hands and their feet should be cut off on opposite sides." Some opinions stated that crucifixion was also applicable to crimes like stealing, witchcraft, heresy or insults against the Prophet. This meant an interpretation ad hoc of 5:33, where the public offense is seen as a cause of corruption in society.[15] When discussing crucifixion, scholar Lévy- Provençal has already indicated how the penalty was never imposed without a previous consultation with the tribunal of the fatwá.[16]

The cutting of hands on the other hand reflects on the qu'rānic sūra 7:11, 120 which says: "Said Pharaoh, 'Do ye believe in him ere I give you leave? This is craft, which ye have devised in the land, to turn its people out there from, but soon shall ye know! I will cut off your hands and your feet from opposite sides, then I will crucify you altogether!'" The penalty suffered by Rogelius and Serviodeo connects their martyrdom directly with Islam and establishes a disparity between the religion they attack and the religion they defend. This exemplarity is also appreciated in the crucifixion of the martyrs and its own historical inaccuracy.

From a historical point of view, the martyrdom and crucifixion of the martyrs resonates with contemporary events in the city of Córdoba. The

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[15] M. FIERRO, "Violencia, política y religión", in *De muerte violenta. Política, religion y violencia en Al-Andalus*" (Madrid: Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2004), p. 57. In 922, the mystic Mansur al-Hallaj suffered this very same punishment: his hands and feet were cut and he was crucified after enduring 500 lashes. His body was burned and his ashes were scattered.

[16] Evariste LÉVI-PROVENÇAL, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane* (Leiden: Brill, 1950), p. 230.

first case is mentioned by the Abbot Samson around 860, when a Christian man was executed. Ibn Sahl mentions the case of a woman named Dhabba who affirmed that Jesus was God and who was either burned or decapitated. In 850, a man from Córdoba who claimed to be a prophet gave his exegesis of the Qu'rān. When he refused to retract, he was crucified.[17]

3. Recognizing Martyrdom

Rather than being inconsistent, the use of legal proceedings in the *Memoriale* is clarified by the use that the *Memoria* males of the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the tradition of the martyrs of Sebaste.

3.1. Corinthians

The First Epistle to the Corinthians addresses the erroneous views in the Corinthian church and is a call to the uniformity of believers "ut idipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in vobis schismata, sitis autem perfecti in eodem sensu et in eadem sententia."[18] The letter shows the powerful self-control and anguish of the Apostle Paul and his concern with the sins of impurity committed by Christians. The epistle is divided into two parts. In the first part, the apostle rebukes Corinthians for their faults and shows the absurdity of their divisions, their deals with incest, their lawsuits before pagans, and their impurity. In the second part, he deals with questions regarding impurity, virginity, the use of things offered to idols, proper decorum in church, spiritual gifts, resurrection and the collections for the poor of Jerusalem.[19] Overall the letter is not concerned with individual

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[17] Jorge AGUADÉ, "Some remarks about sectarian movements in Al-Andalus", *Studia Islamica* 64 (1986), pp. 53-77. See also *Dhikr bilād al-Andalus.* Translated by Luis MOLINA (Madrid: Centro Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1983), vol. 1, p. 132; vol. 2, pp. 140-141.

[18] *1 Corinthians* 1, 10.

[19] Hans CONZELMANN, *1 Corinthians: a commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Translated by James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975). Cf. Judith L. KOVAKS, *1 Corinthians: interpreted by early Christian commentators* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005).

salvation, but in the organization and structure of the Christian community of Corinth.[20]

Inasmuch as it was a statement of orthodoxy, the first epistle to the Corinthians provided a most useful model for declaring orthodoxy in Eulogius' initial plea. In the first part of the *Memoriale*, Eulogius laments the example of those Christians, even priests, who refuse to admit the validity of such martyrdoms, because they were not driven by violence and accused them of committing suicide:

> Sunt autem plerique fidelium, et (heu proh dolor!) etiam sacerdotum, temere horum confessorum gloriam adimere non verentes, qui iubent eos non recipi in catalogo sanctorum, inusitatum scilicet atque profanum asserentes huiusmodi martyrium. Quippe quos nulla violentia praesidalis fidem sua negare compulit, nec a cultu sanctae piaeque religionis amovit; sed propria se voluntate discrimini offerentes ob superbiam suam (ita dicunt) quae initium est omnis peccati, interempti, suarum parricidae effecti sunt animarum.[21]

To them, Eulogius refutes that they will never possess the Kingdom of God: "*Neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt.*"[22] The use of this passage becomes in this point interesting because it contributes to unveil the Eulogius' complex justification of the martyrs.

Eulogius addresses the problem of martyr veneration through a short commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians.[23] Correlating the veneration of the martyrs with their recognition, he reprobates the actions

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[20] Richard B. HAYS, *First Corinthians* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1997).

[21] *Memoriale* 1, 18.

[22] *1 Corinthians* 6, 10.

[23] Saint Cyprian († 258 A. D.) recommended that the utmost diligence be observed in investigating the claims of those who were said to have died for the faith. All the circumstances accompanying the martyrdom were to be inquired into; the faith of those who suffered, and the motives that animated them were to be rigorously examined, in order to prevent the recognition of undeserving persons. Evidence was sought from the court records of the trials or from people who had been present at the trials.

of those who dare condemn the voluntary martyrdoms, because they too will not reach the Kingdom of God: "neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt".[24] Later on, Eulogius discusses the problem of the relics of the saints. For Eulogius, the body itself was of little importance in comparison to the great advantage of martyrdom. Eulogius stresses how the saints themselves should not care to have a poor or a sumptuous grave, and he goes on to quote a verse by Lucan, expressing that he who does not have a grave is covered by the sky:

> vel de inhumatis curare poterant membris hi qui vere sciebant quod, sicut nihil commodius foret impiis sepultura, auctis reverentiae studiis solemniter praeparata, ita beatis et sanctis nequaquam officere posset vilem, aut nullam sepulturam adipisci. Licuit etiam de hoc poetis plausibiliter ludere: *Caelo tegitur, qui non habet urnam.*[25]

In his translation of the *Memoriale*, Pedro Herrera Roldán has already observed how Eulogius' apology followed in fact St. Augustine's condemnation of the Donatist heresy in the City of God. Like in the *Memoriale*, the discussion of legitimacy becomes crucial in the recognition of orthodoxy and the promise of a future integration of all body remains, no matter how scattered they were:

> Rident haec illi, contra quos defendendam suscepimus ciuitatem Dei. Verum tamen sepulturae curam etiam eorum philosophi contempserunt. Et saepe uniuersi exercitus, dum pro terrena patria morerentur, ubi postea iacerent uel quibus bestiis esca fierent, non curarunt, licuitque de hac re poetis plausibiliter dicere: *Caelo tegitur, qui non habet urnam*. Quanto minus debent de corporibus insepultis insultare Christianis, quibus et ipsius carnis membrorumque omnium reformatio non solum ex terra,

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[24] 1 *Corinthians* 1, 18.

[25] Emphasis is mine. *Memoriale* 1, 17. The verse is taken from LUCAN (*Pharsalia* VII, 819) and also found in ST. ISIDORE (*Etymologiae* 16, 27, 14) and ST. AUGUSTINE (*De Civitate* 1, 12, 5).

> uerum etiam ex aliorum elementorum secretissimo sinu, quo dilapsa cadauera recesserunt, in temporis puncto reddenda et reintegranda promittitur.[26]

Not willing to give any concessions to his opponents, Augustine is prompted to discuss several cases of suicide in the Bible, namely the death of Al-Razī, who "preferred to die nobly rather than fall in the hands of sinners"[27] and the death of Samson, who took down the roof of the temple over himself and the Philistines.[28] Making a clear distinction between personal determination and divine commandment, Augustine exposes how both Al-Razī and Samson were directed by God's command. Augustine's interpretation of the Sixth Commandment recognizes that there are exceptions to the commandment against killing, made by the authority of God himself: "There are some whose killing God orders, either by a law, or by the express command of a particular person at a particular time."[29] Anyone who is not inspired by God, is involved in a charge of murder.

The confrontation between St. Augustine and the Donatists offers an interesting parallel with the *Memoriale*. According to Donatists, the validity of sacraments depended on the validity of the priest, and that those who had surrendered during the persecution of Diocletian had cut themselves from the Christianity, and that re-baptism by a consecrated high priest was henceforth necessary to join their sect. Their reaction against Catholics, who had decided to cooperate with the emperor, was often violent. Developing a culture of martyrdom, they terrorized the people of

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[26] *De civitate* 1, 12.
[27] *II Machabaeorum* 14:42.
[28] *Iudicum* 16:23-31.
[29] *De Civitate* 1, 21.

Northern Africa and re-baptized them.[30] Faced with the need to overturn them, St. Augustine questions the validity of their sacrifice.[31]

For St. Augustine, martyrdom was expressed by its cause and not by the punishment infringed on the victim. Seen in this light, the actions of the Donatists constituted a violation of the commandment "Thou shall not kill," and opened the door to eternal punishment. In his view, suicide constituted a violation of natural law, an offense comparable to the suicide of Judah, aggravated by the fact that the perpetrator acts against his own humanity:

> nam utique si non licet priuata potestate hominem occidere uel nocentem, cuius occidendi licentiam lex nulla concedit, profecto etiam qui se ipsum occidit homicida est, et tanto fit nocentior cum se occiderit, quanto innocentior in ea causa fuit, qua se occidendum putauit.[32]

Drawing on the Augustinian definition of suicide, the *Memoriale* carefully crafts the voluntary martyrdoms of Córdoba as a reaction against

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30 Ronald CHRISTENSON, "The Political Theory of Persecution: Augustine and Hobbes", *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 12:3 (1968), p. 422.

31 TERTULLIAN approved the conduct of the martyrs. He believed that martyrdom's witness-bearing would draw others to Christianity and wash away all sins. *Apologeticum* 50, 15-16. Eusebius relates the lives of numerous martyrs. His main aim was to transmit their memory and highlight three themes: apostolic succession in opposition to heretics, the calamities of the Jews and the struggles of the Christian martyrs. Felice LIFSHITZ, "The Martyr, The Tomb, and the Matron", in Gerd ALTHOFF, Johannes FRIED, Patrick J. GEARY (eds.), *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), p. 314. For GREGORY OF NAZANZIUS, the validity martyrdom is gauged by its own legitimacy: some men suffer like Christian martyrs but deserve to be punished as heretics (*Orationes* xlii, 5-6). In one case St. Cyprian authorizes king martyrdom. Writing to on the repentants who were asking to be received back into the church, St. Cyprian said that if they truly and with constancy repent what they have done, and the fervor of their faith prevails, he who *cannot* be delayed may be crowned: "Si comissi veri et firmiter poeniter et fidei calor prevalent, qui diferri non potest, poteswt coronary" (*Epistola* xiii).

32 *De Civitate* 1, 17.

injustice but also as an unmotivated initiative that could only have been inspired by God. At the same time, the recognition of the validity of the martyrdoms became a crucial element in gauging the righteousness of those who denigrate them. Drawing on Augustinian reservations about on suicide, Eulogius explains how these iniquitous people accuse the martyrs of having turned themselves into parricides of their own souls: "suarum parricidae effecti sunt animarum."[33] He then accuses them of not having been able to interpret the scriptures in a Christian way, following the example of more educated people to the point that they abandon the way of "sane doctrine":

> Nec contenti sunt Scripturas sano sensu intelligere, sed eas pro suo libitu exponentes, dum in superficie litterarum quasi concordantia suae vesaniae repererint testimonia, non modo Christiano more simpliciter eis utuntur, vel ab eruditioribus virtutem sensus earum explorant (…) Et ut facilius agnoscantur cuius partis sint defensores, per devios intelligentiae suae calles veritatem Scripturae torquentes, lineam sanae doctrinae proprio electionis iudicio derelinquunt. Ut quandoque illis ad interitum animarum suarum proveniat.[34]

The problem of the correct interpretation of the scripture lies at the heart of the *Memoriale's* mission to legitimize the existence of the voluntary martyrs of Córdoba. Like in the case of St. Augustine versus the Donatists, the recognition of martyrdom in the *Memoriale* becomes recognition of orthodoxy. Eulogius cites in his credit the correct interpretation of the scriptures and warns against those who want to interpret them according to their own will. By means of their intelligence or understanding, they distort Scripture and abandon the right doctrine. Whoever admits the validity of the martyrdoms puts himself on the path of the right church. Drawing from a number of different hagiographical sources like the defense of martyrdom articulated by St. Augustine, the *Memoriale* is able to represent the passion

[33] *Memoriale* 1, 18.
[34] *Memoriale* 1, 19.

of the martyrs of Córdoba as part of a trial process, where the enemy confronts yet unwillingly recognizes the legitimacy of the martyrs' cause.

3.2. Martyrs of Sebaste

In a recent study on a Turin Manuscript of the Passion of the five Martyrs of Sebaste (B.II.4), Kurt Weitzman sets out a series of points that are applicable to the *Memoriale* and comments on the ritualization of the story of the five martyrs of Sebaste and studies most specifically the figure of the judge and the public forum where the martyrs are confronted. The story tells how, during the persecution of Diocletian, five martyrs of Sebaste presented themselves before the Forum authorities.

Three of them (Auxentios, Eugene and Mardarios) were decapitated, had their hands cut and were crucified upside-down. They were survived by Orestes and Eustratius. These two saints were then sent to Agricolaus, who governed the whole East and who tried to make a last attempt to persuade him to worship the pagan idols; by his command these Saints received their end as martyrs by fire in 296.

In order to convey the impression of the Roman legal court, the manuscript of Turing represents the archon sitting behind a table, while a colonnade pictorializes the courtroom. Eustratios stands with raised hands, speaking to Agricolaus.[35] Like in the story of Perfectus, the confrontation between St. Eustratios and the chieftain is framed in the setting of a public space, visible to every single person in the city.

The importance of the Eustratios cycle lies in that it proves the existence of a well established model of voluntary martyrdom, characterized by the intervention with a legal authority and the confrontation of religious beliefs. In every case, the martyr is presented to the authority and is given an occasion to retract. To mark the public dimension of the scene, the magistrate is depicted in front a colonnade that can either represent a

[35] Kurt WEITZMAN, "Illustrations to the Lives of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 33 (1979), pp. 95-112.

courthouse or a temple. But this is no fixed pattern. The flexibility of this model becomes especially visible in the story of Rawh al Qurayshī.

Considered by Sidney Griffith as one of the sources of the *Memoriale*, the legend of Rawh al Qurayshī tells of the conversion of a Muslim man who belonged to the tribe of the Prophet Muhamamd and was also related to the caliph of Baghdad. After going to Jerusalem in order to tell his story to the patriarch Elias and after being baptized in the Jordan River, he was imprisoned in Damascus and brought forth to the caliph Hārūn ar–Rashīd, his uncle. Unwilling to condemn him, Hārūn ar–Rashīd offered him money, clothes and honor, assuming that desperation may have led him to this situation. Finally, he was beheaded and his body was crucified on the bank of the Euphrates.[36]

Judging from previous antecedents, the confrontation between the Christian martyr and the judge constitutes mainly a declaration of principles, a confrontation between Islam and Christianity. In this process, the judge is the agent that sanctions the new relationship and recognizes the role of the martyr as a negative reflection of Islam and a depositary of

[36] The story in fact appears in several works, always related to the Melkite controversies in which Arabic became a religious option for searching Muslims. Daniel J. SAHAS, "What an Infidel saw that a Faithful did not: Gregory Dekapolites († 842 A. D.) and Islam", in N. M. VAPORIS (ed.), *Orthodox Christians and Muslims* (Brookline, MS: Holy Corss Orthodox P, 1986), pp. 47-67. Sidney GRIFFITH, "Christians, Muslims and Neo-martyrs: Saints' Lives and Holy Land History" in Arieh KOFSKY and Guy S. STROUMSA (eds.), *Sharing the Sacred: Religious Contacts and Conflicts in the Holy Land. First- Fifteenth Centuries CE* (Jerusalem: Yad Ishak Ben Zvi, 1998), pp. 163-208. David VILA, "The Struggle over Arabization in Medieval Arabic Christian Hagiography", *Al-Masaq* 15:1 (2003), p. 38. See also D. VILA, "The Martyrdom of "Rawh Al-Qurayshi and the Development of an Early Arabic Christian Community", in Cyrian K. PULLAPILLY (ed.), *Christianity and Native Cultures* (Notre Dame: IN: Cross Cultural P, 2004), pp. 83-95. Vila discusses the dissemination of the legend and concludes that it was already well established by the 12th century. Cf. Samir Khalil SAMIR, "Saint Rawh Al-Qurasi. Étude d'onomastique Arabe et authenticité de sa passion", *Le Muséon* 105: 3-4 (1992), pp. 343-359. The motif of throwing the bodies into the river is also present in the tradition of the Martyrs of Amorion. Atina KOLIA-DERMITZAKI, "The Execution of the Forty-two Martyrs of Amorion: Proposing an Interpretation", *Al-Masaq* 14:2 (2002), pp. 141-162.

Christian faith. From the legal point of view, the development of the story of Rawh al Qurayshī transcends the idea of a political confrontation and reflects a deliberate attempt to destroy any family bonds. It is only once these bonds are severed that the saint is able to identify himself with the new Christian community and give full meaning to his profession of faith.

An extensive reappraisal of the tradition of the forty martyrs in Byzantine hagiography would be out of place in this essay, but its similarities with the episode of the martyrs of Córdoba may indicate a need to take a new look at the *Memoriale*, the religious context of which is being brought forward by the great number of coincidences that exist between the *Memoriale* and the eastern tradition of group martyrdom.

Within this tradition, the most striking example is given by the forty martyrs of Sebaste. According to legend, forty Christian soldiers were condemned by the prefect to be exposed naked upon a frozen lake near Sebaste on a bitterly cold night. Among the confessors, one yielded and, leaving his companions, sought the warm baths near the lake which had been prepared for anyone who fled. One of the guards set to keep watch over the martyrs saw a light over them and at once proclaimed himself a Christian. He threw off his garments, and placed himself beside the thirty-nine soldiers of Christ. Thus the number of forty remained complete. At daybreak, the stiffened bodies of the confessors, which still showed signs of life, were burned and their ashes cast into a river. The Christians, however, collected the precious remains.[37]

The cult of the forty martyrs of Sebaste belongs to a long tradition of Easter group martyrologies like the 48 martyrs of Lyon, executed in 177, or the 42 martyrs of Amorion, who were beheaded in 845.[38] A look into the different variants reveals that, contrary to what occurs in the *Memoriale*, all

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[37] *Homilia* 19, 31, 507.

[38] Other groups are the 33 martyrs of Mililene, 33 martyrs of Nocimedeau, 38 martyrs of Thrace, the 40 virgin martyrs, 40 martyrs of Sebaste, the 40 martyrs of Rome or the 45 martyrs of Nocopolis. For a discussion of the importance of the number forty in Eastern philosophy, religion and folklore, see F. W. HASLUK, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1929), p. 390.

saints are always represented as members of the same sex. Continuing in this tradition, the most immediate source of the *Memoriale* must be found in the Iberian passionaries of the martyrs of Zaragoza, where women and men suffered martyrdom together by decapitation under the governor Dacian. Engratia was a native of Braga who had been promised in marriage to a nobleman of Rousillon. He sent as her escort to Gaul her uncle Lupercius, a suite of sixteen noblemen and a servant named Julia. Upon reaching Zaragoza, they learned of the persecution of Christians there by the governor Dacian, who reigned in the time of the emperors of Diocletian and Maximian. She attempted to dissuade him from his persecution, but was whipped and imprisoned when it was discovered that she was a Christian. She died of her wounds. Her companions were decapitated. The oldest testimony is recorded by Prudentius. On the occasion of the synod of Zaragoza in 592 a special mass was written that came to be known as the mass of Santa Engracia of the 18 martyrs.

The case of the martyrs of Sebaste remains the most significant not only because it was the most widespread cult, but also because of its symbolism. Traditionally represented as half dressed and into the water, the martyrs of Sebaste came to be soon associated with ideas of kinship and baptism. In an article on the Forty in Byzantine art, Zaga Gavrilovic comments on the frequent representation of the martyrs of Sebaste in the nartex of the church, a place usually reserved for the baptistery: "The circumstances of the Forty's death –the water of the freezing lake, the martyr's nakedness, the light and the crowns descending from the sky, and the symbolism of the number 40- are used to explain the Forty's passion as a baptism through water and fire. Moreover, the blameless phalanges, finally rewarded, crowned and clothed in white is compared to the spiritual bride of Christ."[39]

The association between group martyrdom and the sacrament of baptism is important, because it explains the link that exists between collective

[39] Zaga GAVRILOVIC, "The Forty in Art", in Sergei Hackel (ed.), *The Byzantine Saint. Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), p. 191.

sacrifice and community building. Baptism is the ritual act, with the use of water, by which one is admitted as a full member of the Christian Church. Baptism infuses man with divine grace. The association between martyrdom and baptism is already expressed by Jesus in the Bible, when he calls martyrdom a baptism: "Iesus autem ait eis nescitis quid petatis potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibo aut baptismum quo ego baptizor baptizari".[40]

For Saint Cyprian of Carthage, Catechumens who suffer martyrdom are not deprived of the sacrament of baptism. Rather, they are baptized with the baptism of blood.[41] Baptism is necessary for salvation, but it can be replaced by baptism of martyrdom or desire. In his exposition of martyrdom, St. Augustine draws on the New Testament and conceives the Christian experience of martyrdom solely in light of New Testament witness-bearing. Avoiding sacrificial language, he points out how Christian martyrdom was not just another sacrifice, but a sign of the *eschaton*. Martyrdom does not perform any redemptive work for the martyr and discards the belief that martyrdom was a second baptism. Instead, he establishes the difference between the blood of Christ and the blood of the martyrs. Just as Christ had poured his blood to redeem mankind, the martyrs spread their blood to spread His Gospel.[42] Again and again, Augustine emphasizes this confessional aspect of martyrdom to his congregation. Augustine defends the inspiration of God over any supposed sacrifice of a martyr:

> Promisit enim et hoc testibus suis Christus in Evangelio, quos ad huiusmodi certamina praeparabat. Sic enim ait: Nolite praemeditari quomodo aut quid loquamini. Non enim vos estis qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri qui loquitur in vobis. Caro ergo patiebatur, et Spiritus loquebatur.[43]

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40 *Mark* 10:38.
41 *Epistola* 72.
42 *Sermones* 318, 1.
43 *Sermones* 276, 2.

The affinity between baptism and martyrdom was already highlighted by the Canons of Hippolytus: "A catechumen who is taken and led to bear his witness and is killed before he could be baptized, let him be buried with the other martyrs: for he is baptized in his own blood."[44] For Tertullian, the blood of the martyrs is the "seed" of the Church, an assertion that was to influence the symbolism of the pope.[45] An implication of these interpretations is that Christ's voluntary sacrifice was construed equally as an exemplary human act, that could be emulated by lesser mortals, and as a pivotal, supra-human, eschatological event in the life of the Savior. Martyrdom therefore became a potent model of human virtue and served as an Analogue to the definitive eschatological event of Christ's crucifixion. From this angle, Augustine recognizes that martyrdom can be a substitute for baptism and is led to say that faith and conversion of heart may compensate when there has been no opportunity to receive baptism.[46]

In the case of the martyrs of Sebaste, baptism is signified by their immersion in water and by their half clothing, in the manner of typical baptism iconography of Christ. This association is confirmed by several allusions in two *kontakia* (hymns) of Melodios the Romanos. The circumstances of their deaths involved the freezing water and the crowns descending from the sky to represent their baptism through water and fire. The baptism of the forty martyrs represents in sum a ritual of community. St. Cyprian had laid down the general principle that he who is not in the church cannot be a martyr.[47] Contrary to Tertullian and the Passion of Perpetua, Saint Augustine declares that martyrdom does not perform any redemptive work for the martyr and distinguishes between the blood of Christ and the blood of the martyrs: "Redempti sunt sanguine, qui sanguinem pro Redemptore fuderunt. Ille fudit, ut eorum salus redimeretur:

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44 Hans ACHELIS, *Die Canones Hippolyti in Texte und Untersuchungen* 6 (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs Verlag, 1891).

45 Massimo MIGLIO, *Storiografia pontificia del quattrocento* (Bologna: Pátron, 1975).

46 *De Baptismo* 4, 29.

47 *De Unitate* 14.

illi fuderunt, ut Evangelium eius diffamaretur."[48] Only the blood of Christ redeems the Christian; the Christian's blood provides the testimony by which the Church grows.

In the *Memoriale*, martyrdom is unquestionably identified with the notion of baptism. Invoking the authority of the New Testament, Eulogius indicates that whoever believes will be baptized. Immediately after, he encourages Christians not to fear those who cause death, but instead to fear He who can send them into *Gehenna*. He then invites them to publicize their faith in front of all people:

> Qui crediderit, et baptizatus fuerit, salvus erit: qui vero non crediderit, condemnabitur. Et iterum: Nolite timere eos qui occidunt corpus, quia non habent quid amplius faciant; sed potius eum timete, qui potest corpus et animam perdere, et mittere in gehenna. Vos estis lux mundi. Non potest civitas abscondi super montem posita: neque accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio. Quod dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine. et quae in aure audistis, praedicate super tecta. Quod in mysterio cognovistis, apertius enarrate; quod didicistis abscondite, publice loquimini; quod vos erudivi in parvo Judeae loco, in universis urbibus, et in toto mundo audacter dicite.[49]

The relation between martyrdom and community is mediated by the communion of saints. According to the definition given by Joseph Sollier, the communion of saints is "the spiritual solidarity which binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven in the organic unity of the same mystical body under Christ its head, and in a constant interchange of supernatural offices. The participants in that

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[48] *Sermones* 318, 1. For a discussion of martyrdom in St. Augustine, see Collin S. GARBARINO, *Reclaiming Martyrdom: Augustine's Reconstruction of Martyrdom in Late Antique North Africa*. M.A. Thesis. (Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1998). See also J. D. C. FISCHER, *Christian Initiations: Baptism in the Medieval West* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004).

[49] *Memoriale* 1, 5.

solidarity are called saints by reason of their destination and of their partaking of the fruits of the Redemption.[50] The damned are excluded from the communion of saints. The living, even if they do not belong to the body of the true Church, share in it according to the measure of their union with Christ and with the soul of the Church."[51]

Conclusion

This article has identified the origin of the voluntary martyrdoms of Córdoba in the context of Augustinian discussion on martyrdom and orthodoxy. As part of this task, the article traced the use of the concept of martyrdom in the *Memoriale*. The defense of voluntary martyrdom, first enumerated in the works of St. Augustine, eventually evolved into a concept of spiritual rebirth. In the episode of the martyrs of Córdoba, the determination of the martyrs to disparage Islam was incumbent once spiritual maturity and doctrinal instruction had been completed. In the exercise of martyrdom, the opposition to Islam was never an act in itself. Rather, the intention of the martyr was to be treated as a witness. To do this, he/she reflected on religious and social practices of the time and as well as Byzantine hagiographic models. This imitation is manifested in the resolution of the martyr to present him or herself before the Muslim authority and make a declaration that prompts his/her social exclusion and his/her public execution on the riverside of the city.

A look into the sources employed by Eulogius reveals that the author of Córdoba relied on Byzantine models to shape the main narrative of the *Memoriale.* Aware, however, of the contradictions and limitations of these models, he carefully shaped his apology according to the condemnation of heresy contained in St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei,* and transformed the vindication of martyrdom into a defense of religious orthodoxy. The

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50 1 *Corinthians* 1, 2.

51 Joseph SOLLIER, "The Communion of Saints", in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 4 (1908), 18 Jan. 2011 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04171a.htm>.

efficacy of the Augustinian model allowed the author of the *Memoriale* to reinterpret Byzantine hagiographic material and present the martyrdom of Córdoba as a rallying declaration of religious orthodoxy. Using Islamic legal practice as a theoretical and jurisprudential legitimization of orthodox power, the centrality of martyr recognition is strengthened by the martyrs' own ability to communicate a strategic message and to legitimize the existence of the religious group they represent.

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